“There’s a woman having her hair cut”.

A case study of data driven learning in a vocational school for hairdressers

Elisa Corino – Claudia Buschini
Università di Torino
Aim:

To prove that corpora as a tool for inductive language teaching and learning can be successfully used also in classes with a low level of language proficiency and poor motivation.
Setting

vocational school
The Participants

17 Students
- third year course for hairdressers
- aged between 15 and 19
- 14 Italian native speakers, 1 Chinese, 1 Moldavian, 2 Rumanian
- prior the beginning of the project, all of them had studied English for an average of six years
- average English level between A1 and A2
I am Graham from London. It’s a very busy picture of a women’s hairdresser’s with lots of women having their hair cut, although I can see a man on the right hand side. It’s a very busy place. There’s a woman sweeping the floor, picking up all the hair. There’s child at the counter, she’s probably making lots of noise. There’s lots of people working actually in the hairdresser: they are drying the hair, curling the hair, cutting the hair. It’s also a busy place with lots of things, there is a television on the ceiling. I think it’s pretty noisy in there as well, very busy. There’s a lady answering the phone as well. So it looks like a very busy women’s hairdresser’s.
The Corpus

Transcription

(Signs of hesitation, repetitions, and false starts were left out; expressions such as gonna and 'coz, and contractions such as there's, it's, don't etc., were transcribed without standardizing them.

A minimal amount of punctuation was added in order to make the text clear)

Upload onto LancsBox

3776 tokens, 550 lemmata
The teacher’s DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH

- 20 most frequent lexical items
- Recurring syntactic structure *to have* + object + *pp*
- many of the native speakers used the expression *there’s* + plural noun (freq. 11 - *there’s two ladies, there’s lots of people, there’s drawers...*) → spoken language
  - however, the level of English of the learners was too low for them to be able to be fully aware of such details (admittedly, nobody in the class raised questions in this regard when listening to the recordings or reading the transcriptions)
Lesson plan

1. Assessment of prior knowledge of vocabulary and grammar structure
2. Focus on eight situations taken out of the overall picture: listening of a selection of recordings in order to start filtering the information and focus on noteworthy sentences
3. Corpus-based analysis of verbs and nouns, and exercises
4. Activities at the hairdressing studio and written production (2 week after the DDL tasks)

➢ 12-hour module
Assessment of prior knowledge
Assessment of prior knowledge

Morphosyntax:
- Present continuous
- Causative
  *have sth done*

→ Multiple choice
  (the sentences used as examples in this task were taken from the corpus)

Choose the correct response to complete each sentence.
1. It’s a very busy picture of a women’s hairdresser’s with lots of women _____________.
   a. having their hair cut  
   b. cutting their hair  
   c. get haircut  
   d. having cuts

2. The woman at the back _______________ the floor.
   a. sweep  
   b. stay sweeping  
   c. is sweeping  
   d. are sweeping

3. The lady on the left _______________.
   a. is curling her hair  
   b. has curling  
   c. is getting her hair curled  
   d. gets curls
Assessment of prior knowledge

Oral skills:
Describe the pictures

[...]

Image FF

Image FH
Assessment of prior knowledge: results

VOCABULARY:
- only 3 out of 20 words were guessed by each and every group → mirror, scissors, and rollers.
  - The number of words guessed in each crossword ranged from 5 to 10, less than 50% of the total.
- not all the words were spelled correctly.
- The words which seemed to be the most difficult, so that none of the groups guessed them were: hair clippings, tray table, column, reception desk, shelves, and broom

MORPHOSYNTAX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>questions</th>
<th>Right answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ORAL SKILLS:
- Poor vocabulary
- Poor pronunciation: brush, cut, customer → /ˈbrʌʃ/, /ˈkʌt/, /ˈkɒstəmər/
Discovering the corpus

I am Graham from London. It’s a very busy picture of a women’s hairdresser’s with lots of women having their hair cut, although I can see a man on the right hand side. It’s a very busy place. There’s a woman sweeping the floor, picking up all the hair. There’s child at the counter, she’s probably making lots of noise.

There’s lots of people working actually in the hairdresser: they are drying the hair, curling the hair, cutting the hair. It’s also a busy place with lots of things, there is a television on the ceiling. I think it’s pretty noisy in there as well, very busy.

There’s a lady answering the phone as well. So it looks like a very busy women’s hairdresser’s.
Discovering the corpus

Getting familiar with LancsBox and KWIC

Choose the word most similar in meaning to replace the word in bold

The receptionist looks very busy.
- a. interested
- b. interesting
- c. occupied
- d. quick

It's a very busy salon.
- a. lively
- b. big
- c. old
- d. happy
Using the corpus
Using the corpus

Trolley? Table with wheels?
Using the corpus - syntax

- Explore the corpus and search for action verbs related to hairdressing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDENTIFY</th>
<th>cut, wash, brush, comb, straighten, ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLASSIFY</td>
<td>structure used to describe something done by someone in someone else's interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERALIZE</td>
<td>have/get + object + past participle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using the corpus - syntax

- Explore the corpus
  - Infinitive:
    - next to her is just about to have her hair cut,
    - her hair plaits or she's waiting to get her hair cut.
  - Present simple:
    - not a barber shop where generally men have their hair done.
    - conditioner and sometimes mask before you get your hair cut.
  - Present continuous:
    - you can see that there's a woman having her hair cut
    - In front of her, there's another woman having her hair brushed
    - the right of her there's a woman having her hair dried
    - back on the right there's a lady having her hair washed.
    - There's some more people in the background having their hair done
    - On the bottom left there's a lady getting her hair curled.
    - side in the middle there's a lady getting her hair rinsed.
    - the background I can see a lady getting her hair blow dried.
    - the middle who also looks like she's getting her hair straightened.
    - to leave. Then we have a woman getting her hair washed
  - Simple past:
    - she's already been in the hairdresser's and had her hair plaited
    - product, a mirror and a lady who's had her hair put in curlers
- Have or get?

- Tense
- Formal vs informal
Two weeks later...

Group 1: mime an action
Group 2: describe the action

In this picture there are one hairdresser and one costumer. He is having his hair washed with shampoo, conditioner and water.

The costumer is having her hair colored with a tail comb, dying brush, aluminium foil and bowl.
Results

• All the students used the structure have/get+obj+pp
• Lexical improvement
• Pronunciation improvement

• Consciousness-raising started taking place in the class, leading to a long-term global improvement of the learning conditions, even among the students who are usually not very interested during traditional lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Initial score</th>
<th>Score after the conclusion of the DDL project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lexical knowledge referred to ESP language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morphosyntactic knowledge</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation and fluency</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening and writing skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language awareness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learners’ feedback

I’d like to have more hours for this kind of projects

I found it very useful to be able to work on my own, under the guidance of the teacher and using the software to explore the language

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1. How many years have you been studying English?
2. Did you find it useful to work with authentic data?
3. Did you find it easy to use / interpret the concordance software (LancsBox)?
4. Did you find the work interesting compared to traditional language teaching?
5. Do you think Data-driven learning should be used more in class?
6. Is there anything you would have changed or any comments about the experience?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 2</th>
<th>Very Much</th>
<th>A Bit</th>
<th>Not Much</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>Very Much</td>
<td>A Bit</td>
<td>Not Much</td>
<td>Not at All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question 4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
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<td>Question 5</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Follow up

The corpus provides an enormous amount of material to be exploited:

- Collocations and colligations
- Discourse markers
- Different intonations
- Spoken varieties
- Discourse organization
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Thank you each alternate helpful internet site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The words &quot; thank you &quot; were never uttered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>This site was very helpful - thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>This thank you poem recalls pleasant memories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Their last words before death are usually &quot; thank you &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The startled presenter uttered &quot; thank you &quot; repeatedly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A wonderful blog post - thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Thank you for being such gracious hosts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Thank you very much for inspiring those.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Thank you - very helpful and thought provoking article!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>This is a great post - thank you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Great job everyone and thank you millions!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

elisa.corino@unito.it